

About the Author

SHAYKH MUHAMMAD OWAIS NAGRAMI NADWI was born on 4 January 1914 in Nagram, Lucknow. He hails from an illustrious family of scholars whose educational, scientific, political and reformative services are well known. The Shaykh's father, Shaykh Muhammad Anees Nagrami, along with Shaykh Muhammad Nafees Nagrami, Shaykh Muhammad Idrees, Shaykh Abdur Rahman Nagrami, and Shaykh Husain Ahmad Madani, took full and active part in India's freedom struggle and carried on incessant struggle against *shirk*, heresy, and wrong customs and traditions throughout Awadh.

Shaykh Owais toured and preached about the importance of Tawḥīd, warned against innovations, and advocated for social reforms throughout his life in places like Lucknow, Sultanpur, Rai Bareilly, Barabanki, and far-off villages, and made arrangements for spreading the teachings of Islam in hundreds of homes.

He began his studies in Nagram and later enrolled in Dar al-Uloom Nadwatul Ulama in 1927 where he studied under the illustrious scholars of the time till 1932. After completing his studies, he spent time studying the Six Books of *Ḥadīth* with a special focus on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī* under the tutelage of Shaykh Hussain Ahmad Madani, who was the principal of Darul Uloom Deoband at the time.

In 1939, he went to Dar Al-Musannafin in Azamgarh where he came under the tutelage of Allamah Syed Sulaiman Nadwi. Here he was greatly influenced by the works of Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymīyyah, Imām Ibn al-Qayyim and Shaykh Muḥaddith Shah

Waliullah al-Dehlawi and that reflected in his authored works after this. He helped Shaykh Syed Sulaiman Nadwi complete the famed work of his teacher ‘Allāmah Shibli Nomani, *Sirah al-Nabī* and assisted him in researching and completing other works as well. He stayed and taught there for a period of seven years.

After returning to Lucknow, he took up the mantle of Shaykh al-Tafsīr at Dar al-Uloom Nadwatul Ulama. He was married to the daughter of Shaykh Muhammad Asgar Pratapgarhi. He was blessed to undertake the Hajj pilgrimage in 1948, 1953, and 1964.

With the establishment of the Islamic University in Madinah, the Shaykh was offered a teaching position there. He respectfully denied this honour, citing that India needed his services more at that time. He sent his son to study there instead with the first batch of Indian students. His son, Prof Dr. Yunus Nagrami would also go on to become well known at the international level and was the first Indian adviser of the Muslim World League. The President of India honoured him with the presidential award in 1992 in recognition of his invaluable services to Arabic language and literature. Furthermore, the Shaykh was offered positions in universities and institutes in Peshawar and Calcutta, which he also turned down so that he could focus on his work in Lucknow and its surrounding areas.

Shaykh Owais was a colleague and close friend of Shaykh Abu al-Hasan Ali Nadwi for nearly 25 years. Shaykh Ali writes about him that apart from Shaykh Owais’s services to the Quran, one of his biggest contributions for *da‘wah* was his special class on *tafsīr* which he held for the public of Lucknow. Such was the fame and level of this class that it was attended by the elite of the society, government officials, as well as high ranking officers

from among the Britishers. Shaykh Owais used this platform to teach the true message of the Quran and dispel any doubts that plagued their minds. This led to many more circles of Quranic learning to spring up in the city.

His works, in Arabic, Urdu, and Persian, can be found in some of the most prestigious libraries and universities around the world. Some of his published works include:

- Tafsīr al-Qayyim
- Ta'lim al-Qur'ān
- Al-'Aqīdah al-Sunniyah fī Sharḥ al-'Aqīdah al-Ḥasanah
- Al-Khayr al-Kathīr fī Sharḥ al-Fawz al-Kabīr
- Rehnumai 'Ilm al-Tafsīr
- Fiqh al-Qur'ān
- Uṣūl al-Ḥadīth
- Qur'ān Ka Mut'ala Kaise?
- Taṣawwuf Kya Hain?

Shaykh Owais compiled the scattered commentary on Quranic *āyāt* of Imām Ibn al-Qayyim into one volume that was first published in 1949 in Egypt. This book was widely welcomed and lauded by peers and scholars alike such that it became part of the curriculum for many institutions of learning across the world. He embarked on doing the same for the works of Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymīyyah, but could not complete it. Likewise his other works on grammar (*naḥw*) and rhetoric (*balāghah*) were also left incomplete because of his bad health.

Some of his prominent students include Shaykh Rabi' Hasani Nadwi (India), Shaykh Saaed ar-Rahman Azami (India), Shaykh

Akram Nadwi (UK), Shaykh Muhammad Israil Nadwi Salafi (India), Dr. Zia Nadwi (Saudi Arabia), Shaykh Yousuf Saleh Karajeh (Turkey), Shaykh Dr. Taqi Al-Din Al-Nadwi (UAE), Mufti Zafeeruddin Miftahi (India), Syed Wazih Rasheed Nadwi (India), among many others across the world.

Shaykh Owais passed away on the first of Ramadan, 27 August 1976. His body was washed by the esteemed Shaykh Manzoor Nomani and he was laid to rest in Lucknow. After the burial, Shaykh Manzoor Nomani said, “It was because of the Shaykh’s stronghold on adhering and propagating the creed (*aqīdah*) of Tawḥīd that his face was so relaxed and bright when laid to rest.”

May Allāh (سبحانه وتعالى) have Mercy on the Shaykh and his family, and elevate his ranks in Jannah.